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# The efficacy of *Salvia officinalis* mouthwash extract on gingivitis and its acceptance by pediatric patients: an *in vivo* comparative study

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Children are more prone to develop gingivitis as a result of poor brushing and flossing proficiency, a lack of dedication to maintaining excellent oral hygiene, morphological variance in deciduous teeth, and a diet that encourages the growth of pathogenic oral bacteria. **Aim:** The aim of this study is to compare the therapeutic effect of a *Salvia officinalis* (Common Sage) extract mouth rinse related to that of Chlorhexidine mouth rinse, as well as the pediatric patient's tolerance to their taste. **Methodology:** In this study 48 patients aged between (8-10) years divided into 3 groups each with 16 patients one treated using Sage mouthwash the second treated with Chlorhexidine mouthwash (0.12%) (Positive control) third group treated with distilled water (negative control). One way ANOVA with Tukey's Honest Significant Difference HSD test were used for data assessment. **Results:** Significant differences were found among tested groups ( $P < 0.05$ ) regarding gingival index and acceptance of the mouth washes being evaluated. Chlorhexidine has superior efficacy compared to Sage in treating gingivitis, however Sage should better acceptance from patients. **Conclusion:** Herbal mouthwashes made from *Salvia officinalis* have a lot of potential for treating and preventing periodontal disease in young children, and they have less side effects than conventional mouthwashes.

## KEYWORDS

herbal mouthwash, chlorhexidine, *Salvia officinalis*, gingivitis, common sage

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Bacterial plaque accumulation on the surfaces of teeth throughout early childhood is the foremost source of periodontal disease, which destroys the gingiva and the bone structures that support the teeth. Additionally, periodontal disease, particularly gingivitis, is more common in children [1].

Low awareness of the importance of practicing good oral hygiene combined with anatomical differences between children's and adults' periodontium's, including the width of the attached gingiva

and the existence of spaces between teeth that are ideal for the growth of bacteria [2].

Dental caries, gingivitis, periodontal disease, bad breath, and other dental conditions can be prevented by practicing oral hygiene and maintaining a clean mouth. The main ways to reduce plaque are with mechanical oral hygiene procedures including tooth brushing, interdental brushing, and dental flossing; nevertheless, studies based on populations and clinical experience suggest that many people do not use these methods correctly. [3]

Younger children find it difficult to remove plaque, thus using antiplaque mouthwash with an antibacterial activity is necessary since it is less demanding than employing mechanical methods [4,5]. Chlorhexidine mouthwash has been recognized as the ultimate benchmark against which the efficiency of other antiplaque therapies is assessed [6,7].

Long-term use of Chlorhexidine mouthwash may result in a variety of undesirable consequences, including foul taste and tooth discoloration, which has led to the quest for safer alternatives to mouthwash that young children may use for extended periods of time without experiencing negative effects [8].

There are two strengths of chlorhexidine mouthwash: 0.2% and 0.12% [9]. The 0.12% chlorhexidine utilized during this study not only had the same therapeutic impact as a 0.2% solution, but it also lessened the unpleasant taste and stains encountered from employing chlorhexidine, thereby rendering it more suitable for children [10,11].

For countless epochs, plants have long been used as a source of medicinal compounds. Numerous bioactive compounds are alleged to be accountable for these physiognomies. Besides, Herbal products are inexpensive and have few adverse effects [12].

Common Sage, also known as *Salvia officinalis*, is routinely used in traditional medicine, cosmetics, and food flavoring. *Salvia officinalis* is a widespread fragrant herb that is also well recognized for its antibacterial capabilities [13,14,15]. These qualities have been attributed to diverse spectrum of phytochemicals of *S. officinalis* which contains Phenolic compounds, polyacetylenes, steroids, terpenoids, alkaloids, polysaccharides, fatty acids, glycosidic derivatives, and essential oils.

*Salvia officinalis* is frequently used as herbal medicine for oral inflammation and ulcers such as gingivitis, as well as laryngitis [16]. The aim of this study is to evaluate the clinical effect of a *Salvia officinalis* extract mouth rinse in comparison to that of Chlorhexidine mouth rinse, as well as the pediatric patient's tolerance to the mouthwash taste.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Ethics approval of research

This study was designed to be experimental and conducted at the clinical facilities of Mustansiriyah University. The approval for performing study was obtained from human research ethical committee in the Mustansiriyah University College of Dentistry's (REC reference: REC141 clinical trial was given the number: MUPED02 in 1/9/2022). The study was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

### 2.2. Study population

The study took place at Mustansiriyah University College of Dentistry's pediatric clinic in Baghdad, Iraq, over a six-month period (September 2022-February 2023). A total of 48 patients (30 boys, 18 girls) aged between (8-10) years were assessed in this study.

The parents of potential children's candidates were initially briefed about the study's purpose, the treatment which were to be provided and the period of time for the study. Later, both verbal and written informed consent were obtained and signed by subject's guardians who were willingly to allow their children to participate. Patient's guardians' who did not provide consent were excluded from the study.

### 2.3. Clinical study design

In this study the patients were omitted based on criteria of absence of long-term prescription drugs usage, current antibiotic usage, presence of systemic illness, allergies, Patients shouldn't have used mouthwashes or experienced pathologic changes to their oral mucosa throughout the preceding thirty days earlier to date of participation in this study.

The requirements for inclusion were a gingival index (GI) of 1.1-2 evaluated clinically by two dentists specialized in pediatric dentistry with clinical experience of 10 years in accordance with standards described by Leo and Silness (1964) [17,18].

The participants were picked at random from patients seeking treatment at the Department of Pediatric Dentistry clinic, and were allocated to one of three therapy groups of this study.

### 2.4 Herbal extract preparation

The process of fabrication of the herbal extract was performed in the Microbiology laboratories of

the Mustansiriyah University College of Dentistry. Starting with 5 Kg. of dried sage's leaves were bought at the apothecary.

The leaves were pulverized into powder then immersed in 50 L of 70% Ethanol and frequently agitated for one week. The mixture was purified with a double linen fabric filter and then heated in a multi-function rotary evaporator at 60°C for 1 week until very viscous extract was obtained which was kept in a hermetically sealed flask and refrigerated until usage. 0.5ml of extract was diluted to 100 ml of distilled water [19].

## 2.5 Patients group distribution

Participants were split up into three groups, Group I (n = 16): gurgled with Sage mouthwash, Group II (n = 16): rinsed with Chlorhexidine mouthwash (0.12%) (Positive control) and Group III (n = 16): were given distilled water (negative control) gingival index was computed bestowing to the scheme specified by Loe and Silness afore the treatment (0 reading), after one week of mouth rinsing (7 days) and after two weeks of treatment (14 days) [20].

## 2.6 Study protocol

All solutions of mouthwashes were prepared in identical flasks with the matching hue to discount bias. The flasks were coded and at the conclusion of the study the decoding was done. Children were taught to rinse their mouth with 10 ml of prepared mouthwash in their respective groups for a period of 1 minute twice daily. The period between these two rinsing was approximately 12 hours.

This schedule was consistent with the standardized protocol of Chlorhexidine mouthwash, which must be used at 12-hour intervals since it has been found to reduce salivary bacterial counts for more than 12 hours [21].

The children were advised not to eat or rinse their mouth for the next 30 min. to linger the retention of Chlorhexidine in the oral cavity as is stated by Walton and Thompson [22].

After two weeks of using the mouth washes, patient acceptance was recorded by asking each child about their level of rejection or acceptance to the mouthwash provided and recorded in a scale range of (0 score) for reluctant to use, (1 score) for moderate acceptance and (2 score) for good willing to use with no complaint.

## 2.7. Statistical analysis

Data assembled was recorded in a specially prepared sheet. It comprised patient identification and

clinical examination data on gingival index (GI) values. Later, all data were entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Microsoft, USA). To perform the necessary data tabulation and coding.

The hypothesis was tested using the ANOVA test, followed by multiple comparisons using the Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post-hoc test. For comparing means across research groups. All statistical analyses were conducted using version 21 of The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS IBM) Chicago, Illinois, United States).

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Sample attrition

There was no sample attrition in any of the three groups.

### 3.2 Gingivitis score

Table1 represents descriptive statistics where the mean of gingival scores for the Group I, II, and III are depicted. ANOVA was used to analyze the reduction in gingivitis in the three groups.

No statistical differences were observed at the start of treatment in the baseline value. However, in the middle and the end of the study statistical differences were observed. Thus, multiple comparisons through Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc test were performed to pinpoint which pairs are with significant differences. There was a significant decrease in the gingivitis in both the chlorhexidine and Sage groups at 7 days and 14 days ( $P < 0.05$ ) Table 2.

The Chlorhexidine group showed maximum decrease as compared to the Sage group. The difference in the decrease in gingivitis between Sage and Chlorhexidine groups was statistically significant at both measuring intervals.

Regarding the agreement and compliance (tastefulness) of patients for the Chlorhexidine, Sage mouth rinses and the water placebo, Table 3. Represents descriptive statistics where the mean of agreement scores for the Group I, II, and III measured at the end of the treatment after 2 weeks are depicted. The most distasteful mouth rinse was the Chlorhexidine followed by the sage and the water placebo.

ANOVA test determined presence of significant differences which was confirmed with Tukey HSD post hoc test Table 4. The water placebo was the least distasteful followed by the sage followed by Chlorhexidine as the most distasteful to the patients.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of Gingivitis index (GI) for the three study groups of patients being treated of gingivitis, which were measured at the start of the treatment, one week and after 2 weeks of treatment.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Start	Water	16	1.61	0.309	0.077	1.10	2.00
	Sage	16	1.61	0.314	0.078	1.10	2.00
	Chx.	16	1.61	0.309	0.077	1.10	2.00
7 Days	Water	16	1.62	0.308	0.077	1.10	2.00
	Sage	16	1.40	0.270	0.067	1.00	1.80
	Chx.	16	1.17	0.180	0.045	0.70	1.40
14 Days	Water	16	1.59	0.302	0.075	1.10	2.00
	Sage	16	1.25	0.255	0.063	0.90	1.60
	Chx.	16	0.91	0.190	0.047	0.60	1.20

N= number; Std. = Standard; Chx. =Chlorhexidine

**Table 2.** Gingivitis index (GI) ANOVA and Tukey HSD Post -hoc tests results for the three study groups of patients being treated of gingivitis which were measured at the start of the treatment, one week and after 2 weeks of treatment.

		Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F-value	P-value*	Tukey HSD Post -hoc
Start	Between groups	0.000	2	0.000	0.002	0.998	Non-significant
	Within groups	4.359	45	0.097			
7 days	Between groups	1.620	2	0.810	12.070	0.000	Chx>Sage Water = Non-significant
	Within groups	3.020	45	0.067			
14 days	Between groups	3.645	2	1.823	28.347	0.000	Chx>Sage; Water = Non-significant
	Within groups	2.893	45	0.064			

\*P&lt;0.05 indicates significant; DF= degrees of freedom; Chx. =Chlorhexidine

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics of patient agreement (tastefulness) to 3 mouthwashes being evaluated in this study measured at the end of the study.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Water	16	2.00	0.000	0.000	2.00	2.00
Sage	16	1.75	0.447	0.111	1.00	2.00
Chx.	16	1.12	0.806	0.201	0.00	2.00
Total	48	1.62	0.639	0.092	0.00	2.00

N= number; Std. = Standard; Chx. =Chlorhexidine

**Table 4.** ANOVA and Tukey HSD Post -hoc tests results of patients' agreement to treatments of patient agreement (tastefulness) to 3 mouthwashes being evaluated in this study measured at the end of the study.

	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F-value	P-value*	Tukey HSD Post -hoc
Between groups	6.500	2	3.250	11.471	0.000	Chx. >Sage; Chx. > Water Sage=Water(non-significant)
Within groups	12.750	45	0.283			
Total	19.250	47				

\*P&lt;0.05 indicates significant; DF= degrees of freedom; Chx. =Chlorhexidine

#### 4. DISCUSSION

According to numerous researches, Iraq has a substantial prevalence of periodontal disease and dental caries, since basic dental health is not given much importance by most people, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas [23].

For the treatment of oral and dental illnesses, mechanical plaque removal has been the standard approach practiced worldwide. Yet, data illustrate that mechanical cleaning techniques are inadequate [24,25,26].

For more than 50 years, Chlorhexidine has been regarded as the main chemical agent for controlling plaque. Chlorhexidine, nonetheless, has a sum of adversarial consequences [27,28].

The elevated expense of artificial mouthwashes with antiplaque agents caused a shift to traditional medicine as a crucial source of healthcare for 65-80% of the world's population according to the World Health Organization [29,30]. Hence, herbal mouthwashes appear to be potential substitutes to Chlorhexidine based mouthwashes for the daily oral hygiene of patients with gingivitis, particularly for prolonged usage [31].

Natural plant-based Gingivitis therapies seem to be a viable choice. Natural substances in Sage such as Terpenoids, Steroids, Fatty acids, Rosolic acid in Sage and Sage-based remedies may reduce growth and adherence of oral bacteria and diminish cytokines such as Interleukin-6 and Tumor necrosis factor (TNF) that mediate inflammation [32, 33]. Besides, antioxidant attributes of sage based mouthwashes may guard the gingiva against infection and inflammation [34].

The drive behind this study was to determine if Sage mouthwash can successfully lessen gingivitis in children [15].

Numerous studies have revealed that *S. officinalis* has antibacterial assets towards a broad spectrum of bacterial strains. Moreover, Oliveira *et al.* assessed the antibacterial and non-cytotoxic profiles of *S. officinalis* glycolic extract concentrations against *Streptococcus mutans*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, and *Candida* species clinical samples. At 50 mg/mL, this extract kills all strains [35].

Another study on cariogenic bacteria discovered that when mixed with glass-ionomer Cement (GIC), this extract inhibited *S. mutans* and *Lactobacillus casei* [36]. Bajpai and Tripathi (2010) in their study on the antibacterial activities of the essential oils showed that *Salvia officinalis* exhibited bacteriostatic and bactericidal activities against *Bacillus cereus*, *Bacillus megaterium*, *Bacillus subtilis* and *Klebsiella oxytoca* [37].

A meta-analysis by HeCai *et.al.* Comparing the effectiveness of herbal and chlorhexidine mouthwashes on dental plaque revealed no discernible differences between the two types of mouthwashes. The antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties of herbal medications make them popular for maintaining good oral hygiene [31].

Though the results of herbal mouthwashes are less efficient than chlorhexidine mouthwash, they can be utilized as a suitable oral prophylactic because they have no negative side effects. Various herbal mouthwashes possess anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and anti-oxidant qualities that improve oral hygiene when compared to conventional mouthwashes containing Chlorhexidine [38].

In a research evaluating patients treated with herbal remedies and Chlorhexidine, the bacteria growth was significantly inhibited in both groups, resulting in less plaque and reduced the underlying gingivitis, although Chlorhexidine group had adverse effects such as tongue dryness and feeling of burning there was none displayed by the herbal group [39].

In a different study, patients with moderate-to-severe periodontitis used an herbal mouthwash containing *Salvia officinalis*, which significantly reduced gingival hemorrhage and plaque accumulation when compared to mouthwash containing Chlorhexidine. With comparable effect upon probing depth and clinical attachment level [40].

Similar results were found in another study that examined the protective properties of *Salvia officinalis* essential oil against common mouth infections [41]. Numerous studies showed that the effectiveness of mouthwash containing Chlorhexidine and essential oil of *Salvia officinalis* were equivalent [42]. *S. officinalis* is aromatic with a pleasant scent, and doesn't produce any of the adverse effects of Chlorhexidine, such as metallic taste, dry mouth, discolored teeth, or irritation of the oral mucosa, according to studies that have been published. [43]

This study findings validate previous reports on the antibacterial activity of *S. officinalis* and emphasize that a key component of this action is Manool, a Labdane diterpenoid (C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>34</sub>O) [44, 45, and 46].

The results of this study exhibited that although herbal mouthwash is not as efficient as Chlorhexidine in treating gingivitis, pediatric patients did not like the bitter taste or aftertaste that Chlorhexidine left in their mouths. Since it can be challenging to persuade young children to comply with regimens, this may limit the potential benefits of Chlorhexidine. However, because the *Salvia officinalis*



mouthwash didn't taste unpleasant or leave a foul aftertaste when they rinsed their mouths with this herbal mouth wash, the kids appreciated it. Furthermore, *Salvia officinalis* mouthwash reduced children's gingivitis scores.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Herbal mouthwashes offer a lot of promise to help treat and prevent periodontal diseases in young children, they have less adverse effects and are more readily accepted by the children than traditional chemical mouthwashes.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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